

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
TRSE-00 CU-02 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /073 W
-----162025Z 065616 /43

R 161725Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3384
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL FLORENCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 4325

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING REFLECTS CURRENT COMMUNIST
DILEMMA

SUMMARY. THE CURRENT SEESION OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY'S (PCI) CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CC), ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO DISCUSS THE STUDENT QUESTION, HAS ASSUMED GREATER SIGNIFICANCE IN THE WAKE OF LAST WEEK'S DISTURBANCES IN ROME, BOLOGNA, AND OTHER MAJOR ITALIAN CITIES. PUBLISHED REPORTS OF THE SPEECHES DELIVERED THUS FAR INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH PCI RAW NERVES HAVE BEEN DISTURBED BY THE STUDENT ACTIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE DISCUSSIONS HAVE REVEALED THE DEPTH OF THE DILEMMA FACING THE PARTY AS IT CONTINUES TO COOCUPY AN AMBIVALENT ROLE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION. BERLINGUER'S INTERVENTION AT THE CC MEETING IS AWAITED AS A SIGN OF THE PARTY'S FUTURE ATTITUDE TO THE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE WAKE OF LAST WEEK'S STUDENT DISTURBANCES IN
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ROME, BOLOGNA AND OTHER MAJOR ITALIAN CITIES, THE PCI'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE BEGAN A THREE-DAY SESSION ON MARCH 14. THE CC MEETING HAD BEEN CALLED BY THE PARTY'S DIRECTORATE EARLIER THIS MONTH FOR THE ANNOUNCED PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THE ITALIAN STUDENT QUESTION AMID SIGNS OF A SERIOUS DECLINE IN THE PCI'S INFLUENCE IN AND CONTROL OF THE NATION'S STUDENT MOVEMENT.

2. COMMUNIST YOUTH FEDERATION (FGCI) LEADER MASSIMO D'ALEMA DELIVERED THE OPENING ADDRESS TO THE CC DECRYING THE RECENT VIOLENCE AS AN ORGANIZED ATTEMPT TO THROW THE COUNTRY INTO CRISIS AND TO ATTACK THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE REPUBLIC. AFTER NOTING THAT THE ROOTS OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM ARE DEEP AND ARE LARGELY ATTRIBUTABLE TO 30 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC MISMANAGEMENT, D'ALEMA WENT ON TO POINT OUT THAT THE EFFORT OF THE PARTY AND THE FGCI TO REGAIN LOST INFLUENCE IN THE YOUTH MOVEMENT WILL NOT BE EASY. BOTH GROUPS, HE ADDED, MUST OVERCOME THE SLOWNESS IN RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEM THAT HAS ARISEN AND THE UNCERTAINTY WHICH HAS BEEN REFLECTED IN REACTING TO IT. ADDITIONALLY, D'ALEMA DENOUNCED ATTEMPTS TO FALSIFY PCI POSITIONS WITH A VIEW TO CONFUSE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND THE PCI THEREBY UPSETTING THE NEW BALANCES WHICH HAVE BEEN FORGED BY THE RESULTS OF LATE JUNE'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. FINALLY, D'ALEMA SHARPLY DENOUNCED THE ORGANIZED EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY FORMATIONS (PDUP, AVANGUARDIA OPERAIA, LOTTA CONTINUA) FOR PROVIDING "COVER" FOR THE "SQUADRISM" OF THE NEWLY-FORMED AUTONOMIST STUDENT GROUPS.

3. AS IF TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE THE CC MEETING HAD TAKEN ON IN THE WAKE OF THE BOLOGNA AND ROME EVENTS, PCI SECRETARIAT MEMBER PAOLO BUFALINI (ALSO CHIEF OF THE PARTY'S SECTION FOR PRESS AND PROPAGANDA) WAS CHARGED

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WITH GIVING AN AUTHORITATIVE PARTY VIEW OF THE SITUATION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING D'ALEMA'S ADDRESS. IN HIS SPEECH, BUFALINI MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS: A) THE EXTREMISTS, EVEN IF THEY DECLARE THEMSELVES COMMUNISTS, ARE ADVERSARIES OF THE PCI; B) THE POLICE HAVE NEVER BEEN THE ENEMIES OF THE PCI EVEN IF IN THE PAST THEY HAVE BEEN USED BY THE CAPITALISTS TO SUFFOCATE POPULAR MEVEMENTS; C) THE PCI FIRMLY REJECTS THE IDEA OF ARMED SELF-DEFENSE BY THE MASSES; D) VIOLENCE AND TENSION CAN EASILY LEAD TO A RIGHT-WING REACTION PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF CONSERVATIVE FORCES MAONG THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND OF FOREIGN ELEMENTS WHICH WISH TO PREVENT PCI PARTICIPATION IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. ADDITIONALLY, BOTH D'ALEMA IN HIS LENGTHY DISCOURSE AND BUFALINI IN HIS SHORTER STATEMENT HINT ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS AT A MASTER PLOT BEHIND THE RECENT STUDENT VIOLENCE WHICH IN THE END IS DIRECTED AT WEAKENING THE STRENGTH OF THE PCI. AT ONE POINT IN HIS SPEECH BUFALINI SPECIFICALLY SIAD THAT "WE DO NOT KNOW IF THERE IS A UNIFIED PLAN, IF

THERE IS A UNIFIED CENTER THAT ORGANIZES AND DIRECTS
THE PROVOCATORY ACTIVITY. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT
A CENTER AND A PLAN EXIST."

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4. THE SECOND DAY OF THE CC MEETING WAS DEVOTED TO
EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF THE SPEECHES OF D'ALEMA AND
BUFALINI DURING WHICH DIFFERENCES IN VIEWPOINT, PARTICULARLY
IN TERMS OF STRATEGY TOWARDS THE PRESENT GOVERNING
SITUATION EMERGED. GIORGIO AMENDOLA, VOCAL LEADER OF THE
PARTY'S RIGHT WING, REFRAINED, IN CONTRAST TO PREVIOUS
OCCASIONS, FROM CALLING FOR AN EARLY PCI ENTRY INTO AN
ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. INSTEAD AMENDOLA, ADMITTING THAT
THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT LEAVES SOMETHING TO BE DESIRED,
ARGUED THAT THE TIME IS NOT RIPE FOR A CHANGE IN
CPI ATTITUDE AND WARNED THAT IT WOULD BE AN ERROR
FAVORING THE RIGHT TO PUSH FOR AN EARLY CRISIS.
AMENDOLA ALSO RETURNED TO CRITICISM OF THE TRADE UNIONS
WHICH HE MADE AT A CC MEETING LAST OCTOBER. HE
SUGGESTED THAT IN PUSHING THEIR CONTRACTUAL
DEMANDS, THE UNIONS SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT BY PRO-
TECTING TOO RIGIDLY THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS THEY
RISK CREATING ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES WHICH CAN ONLY ADD

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TO THE EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS FACING ITALY'S YOUTH.

5. ON THE OTHER HAND, ON. LUCIO LIBERTINI WHO CAME TO THE PCI RANKS FOLLOWING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE PSIUP MOVEMENT IN 1972, SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE A CAREFUL AND CRITICAL LOOK AT THE PARTY'S MANAGEMENT OF ITS STRATEGY AND ARGUED THAT A LACK OF CPI DRIVE COULD LEAD TO DISILLUSIONMENT AMONG THOSE WHO ARE LOOKING WITH HOPE TOWARDS THE PCI. IN HIS WORDS, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE REACHED AN IMPORTANT CROSSROADS: "EITHER WE MOVER FORWARD OR WE WILL REGISTER A HISTORIC DEFEAT." FOR HIS PART, PARTY SECRETARY PAJETTA ADDRESSED THOSE WHO ARE QUESTIONING THE PCI'S CONTINUED NON SFIDUCIA FOR THE GOVERNMENT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE PARTY AND THE NATION ARE NOT RECEIVING ANYTHING FOR IT. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO DEMONSTRATE, HE URGED, THAT THE PCI IS NOT IN THE GOVERNMENT AND THAT IT JUDGES THE PRESENT MONOCOLORE TO BE INADEQUATE IN TERMS OF THE NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY.

6. A SUGGESTION THAT THE TIME WAS FAST APPROACHING FOR A CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT CAME FROM SECRETARIAT MEMBER GERARDO CHIAROMONTE, REPORTEDLY A MEMBER OF BERLINGUER'S INNER CIRCLE. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, CHIAROMONTE SAID THAT THE GRAVE EVENTS OF RECENT DAYS "DEMONSTRATE WITH URGENCY THE NEED THAT THERE BE A SERIOUSSTEP FORWARD AND THAT THE COUNTRY HAVE A POLITICAL LEADERSHIP MORE CAPABLE AND EFFICIENT IN ORDER THAT THE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK BE LESS UNCERTAIN. THIS REQUIRES AN AGREEMENT AMONG ALL THE DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR FORCES."

7. COMMENT. BERLINGUE HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED AS THE FINAL SPEAKER AT THE CC CONCLUDING SESSION ON MARCH 16 REFLECTING THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE MEETING HAS ASSUMED IN LIGHT OF RECENT NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. CLEARLY THE PCI HAS BEEN
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STUNG BY THE EVENTS OF LAST WEEK WHICH INDICATE A SERIOUS WEAKNESS AMONG AN IMPORTANT SECTOR OF THE PARTY'S BASE. FURTHERMORE, THE DEBATE HAS INDICATED THE UNCOMFORTABLE POSTION IN WHICH THE PARTY FINDS ITSELF AS A RESULT OF ITS ABSTENSION FOR THE CURRENT GOVERNING FORMULA. THE RHETORIC DEMONSTRATES THAT THE

LEADERSHIP IS AWARE IT HAS FAILED TO CONVINCE AT LEAST A SIZEABLE PORTION OF ITS BASE THAT THE PRESENT TACTIC CAN REAP BENEFITS FOR THE PARTY. ASIDE FROM THE USUAL EXHORTATIONS, WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE LINE OF THE PARTY VIS-A-VIS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WILL HARDEN EVEN FURTHER IN THE DAYS AHEAD AS IT SEEKS TO MAKE SOME PROGRESS TOWARDS EVENTUAL PARTICIPATION IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. THE ANTICIPATED SPEECH OF BERLINGUER SHOULD PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CLUES REGARDING THE STRATEGY WHICH THE PARTY INTENDS TO USE TO ACHIEVE ITS ENDS.

8. AFTER FINISHING THIS MESSAGE WE HAVE LEARNED THAT BERLINGUER WILL NOT SPEAK AT THE CONCLUDING SESSION OF THE CC BECAUSE HE IS "INDISPOSED." ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CC SESSION, ONCE IT IS COMPLETED, WILL FOLLOW IN A SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE.
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Message Attributes

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